



## *Florida House of Representatives*

### Democratic Office

*Franklin Sands*  
*Democratic Leader*

*Geraldine F. Thompson*  
*Democratic Leader Pro Tempore*

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**CONTACT: Mark Hollis**  
**(850) 488-9622**

**The following is a statement by Mark Hollis, communications director of the Florida House Democratic Office:**

“Floridians deserve the facts about federal health care reform legislation and are urged to use skepticism when following the fear-mongering and rumors of defenders of the status quo.

“Unfortunately, a recent report in the SunSentinel and the Orlando Sentinel about how health care legislation may impact state programs exercises sensationalism by focusing on premature conclusions and false assumptions that Florida somehow just can’t afford to make health care affordable and available to more residents.

“The article is based on information presumably provided by unnamed officials at the Agency for Health Care Administration who apparently calculated the cost of expanding Florida’s Medicaid program on what the state pays now – roughly one-third of what the federal government pays – to suggest that Florida’s Medicaid costs would rise \$1.6 billion a year.

“In a sky-is-falling approach that carelessly overlooks key facts pertaining to bills in Congress, the article, *Florida leaders warn health care reform could bankrupt Florida*, published 8/14/09, failed to acknowledge that no bill in Congress requires states to now pay anywhere near a third of the cost of expanding Medicaid

coverage. Additionally, as other news organizations, including The New York Times and (more recently) Health News Florida have reported, bills in Congress do not require states to pay extra until at the earliest 2014, and then any additional costs are expected to be phased in over several years to help states manage new costs.

“Without clarifying the facts, the article liberally allows House Majority Leader Adam Hasner, R-Boca Raton, to predict an unaffordable outcome of health care reform.

“Governor Charlie Crist and AHCA officials should make certain that, in the future, the public, the press and state representatives get accurate assessments of any state costs under federal health legislation. Meanwhile, a number of good resources are available to understand health care legislation in Washington, including those posted by The White House, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).”

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